

EVALUATION REPORT
Brazil - UDF-BRA-07-202-3712
Women and Politics: Gender Advocacy at Local Level in Rio de Janeiro State

i. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

a. The project

The project *Women and Politics: Gender Advocacy at Local Level in Rio de Janeiro State* was implemented in Brazil by the Brazilian Institute for Municipal Administration¹ (IBAM) from 15 November 2008 to 30 July 2011 and included a 10-month no-cost extension. The project had a total budget of US \$248,342 with a remaining balance of US \$27,371.

The project's overarching goal is to build the leadership capacity of elected and future women municipal leaders at the local level in Rio de Janeiro State. The implementing organization, IBAM, sought to achieve this goal employing two strategies:

- Capacity building and training for women leaders and women elected for municipal councilors and
- Technical assistance and advocacy aiming at empowerment of women in office at local levels.

The main group of beneficiaries determined by the project were women elected for Municipal Councilor in the Southern Region of Rio de Janeiro State.

The Municipal elections in 2008 provided an opportunity to increase women's political participation with respect to both voters and candidates, and as such to enhance considerably women's leadership in the municipal government. The previous municipal elections, held in 2004, were marked by the low success rate of women candidates. Despite the fact that 3,650 women were candidates for election, only 90 women were elected as Rio de Janeiro Municipal Councilors, thus resulting in a number of elected women leaders far below the 30% quota required by the national legislation. The quota system was introduced in Brazil by a national law, adopted in 1995, which required a 20% quota for elected women at local level of government. In 1997 the quota was increased to 30%, effective in 2000.

The project was designed to assist Brazilian women political leaders to overcome the risks posed by gender discrimination. It is usually the case in Brazil that women play important roles participating in campaigns and supporting political party candidates, however they encounter serious obstacles as candidates representing political parties. The project aims to support elected women in local government in Rio de Janeiro State and assist them in overcoming the challenges related to their political participation and the implementation of the Federal Quota Law of 1995.

b. Evaluation objectives and methodology

The evaluation process has been guided by the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between UNDEF and UNIFEM and is in compliance with the UNDEF evaluation guidelines, as well as UN Women Evaluation Policy and Guidelines, developed for the first round of UNDEF projects, and the UN Evaluation Group Norms (Standards for Evaluation in the UN system). According to the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding, UNIFEM will carry out a coherent thematic gender evaluation of the nine UNIFEM-executed UNDEF Round II Projects. The evaluation has four main objectives:

¹Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal – www.ibam.org.br

- to analyze the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in UNDEF project strategies and approaches and the impact on women's human rights;
- to capture more systematically contributions being made by UNDEF projects on enhancing engendered democratic governance;
- to assess and validate UNIFEM's contribution to UNDEF's primary purpose of supporting democratization around the world;
- to inform, develop and further refine UNDEF and UN Women's strategic and funding priorities regarding gender and governance and thus support efforts to generate and disseminate lessons and results on gender and democratic governance interventions.

The evaluation methodology is set out in the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between UNDEF and UNIFEM according to which the evaluation was conducted in two stages: scoping study undertaken by the evaluator to analyze the nine UNIFEM-executed Round II project designs and create tailored guidelines/frameworks to ensure the success of the projects, and end-line evaluation undertaken by the evaluator to assess each of the nine UNIFEM-executed projects in the framework of the established evaluation strategy goals.

The nine UNIFEM-executed Round II projects were informed by the Mid-term Assessment Reports, the Final Narrative Reports, and the Final Financial Reports. The evaluation was conducted by an international expert, and UN Women Political Participation Section managed the evaluation process. The evaluation was participatory and involved consultations with UNDEF, UN SRO/CO, UN partners, and other major stakeholders.

c. Development context

The Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988 includes many provisions which seek to ensure the equal rights of all Brazilians and paves the way for non-discriminatory public policies on the basis of gender, race and religion. As a consequence of the democratic process there has been a noticeable positive growth in actions and social movements that strive to ensure the equal rights of women in Brazilian society in general, and in the government and the political sphere in particular. As a consequence, a rise in women's participation and leadership in community-based organizations is observed, a proliferation of women's NGOs has taken place, gender approaches have been incorporated in government plans and policies, and gender studies have been recognized as a subject in the universities.

The democratization process, which marked the end of the military dictatorship in Brazil, has led to a proliferation of political parties which now are addressing the issue of discrimination against women in politics. Most of the political parties today have established women's groups ("collectives") or associations to enable them to incorporate gender sensitive policies in their agenda and in their campaign platforms, as well as to encourage women to embrace the political leadership. Likewise, the increased women's participation in the community based organizations, local associations, grassroots organizations and labor unions, etc., has contributed substantially to the empowerment of women in politics.

To further encourage women's political participation a quota system has been introduced by the Federal Law 9100 adopted in November 1995. Currently, the quota law establishes a 30% requirement for women's participation in the local and national governments. Nevertheless, only 9% of the mayors and only 13% of the municipal councilors, elected in the municipal elections of 2004, were women, due to the fact that the law did not benefit from an enforcing mechanism. In this context, women continue to face serious challenges and discrimination during their campaigns as political candidates. This situation is further aggravated by multiple factors such as the dominant

patriarchal culture in the political sphere, as well as gender violence, lack of accessible information, and prejudice and stereotypes within political parties and government offices.

The persistence of these challenges discourages women from running for office and determines the discriminatory attitudes when women decide to participate in political life. It follows that in the State of Rio de Janeiro the number of elected women is below the national average and the required 30% quota. Only 9% of all municipal councilors in Rio de Janeiro are women.

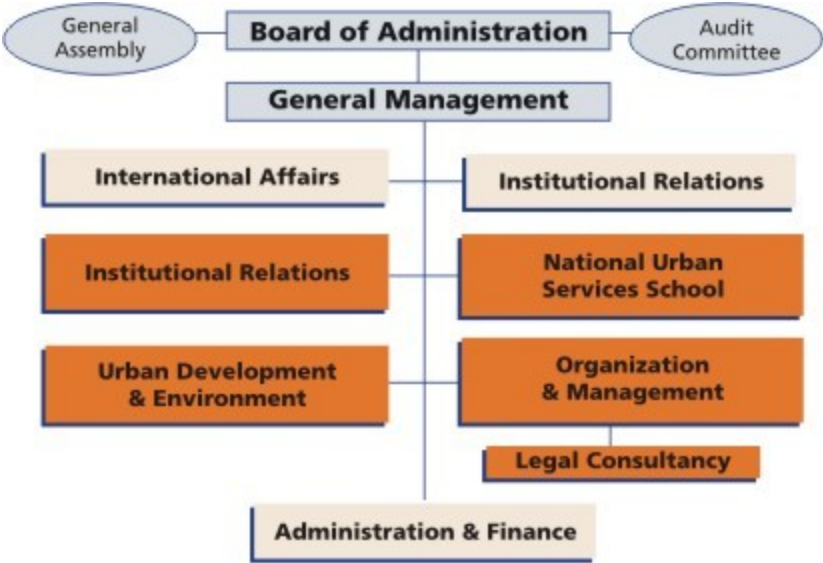
The low level of women’s political participation represents a serious challenge for the democracy in Brazil. The project views this mishap as an opportunity to ensure compliance with the principles of good governance and mainstream gender equality in the political agenda by building the capacity of elected women and by strengthening their alliance with other women in politics, as well as with their constituents.

ii. PROJECT STRATEGY

a. Project approach and strategy

IBAM

The Brazilian Institute for Municipal Administration (IBAM) is non-profit civil association with headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. IBAM's mission is to establish municipalities as autonomous governmental entities and to strengthen their capacity to develop policies, provide services, and foster local development, democratization and promotion of civil rights. IBAM’s initiatives focus on institutional development of the public sector and enhancing effective interaction between local governments and civil society. IBAM develops projects related to drafting legislative bills, reports, plans, and managerial tools, and is involved in regional projects in Latin America and Africa. Furthermore, IBAM plays an important role in terms of advocacy and support for the local government, providing know-how to municipal associations and movements, and is involved in various initiatives such as commissions and working groups on federal and local issues in Brazil. IBAM’s approach to putting its mission into practice has built and strengthened a network of over 4,300 municipalities. The Institute supports networking and partnership building and its staff participates regularly in discussion groups and forums to share knowledge and good practices.



The strategies

The project implementation is based on a set of strategies which include training and capacity building, advocacy and lobbying, as well as networking.

Capacity building and development

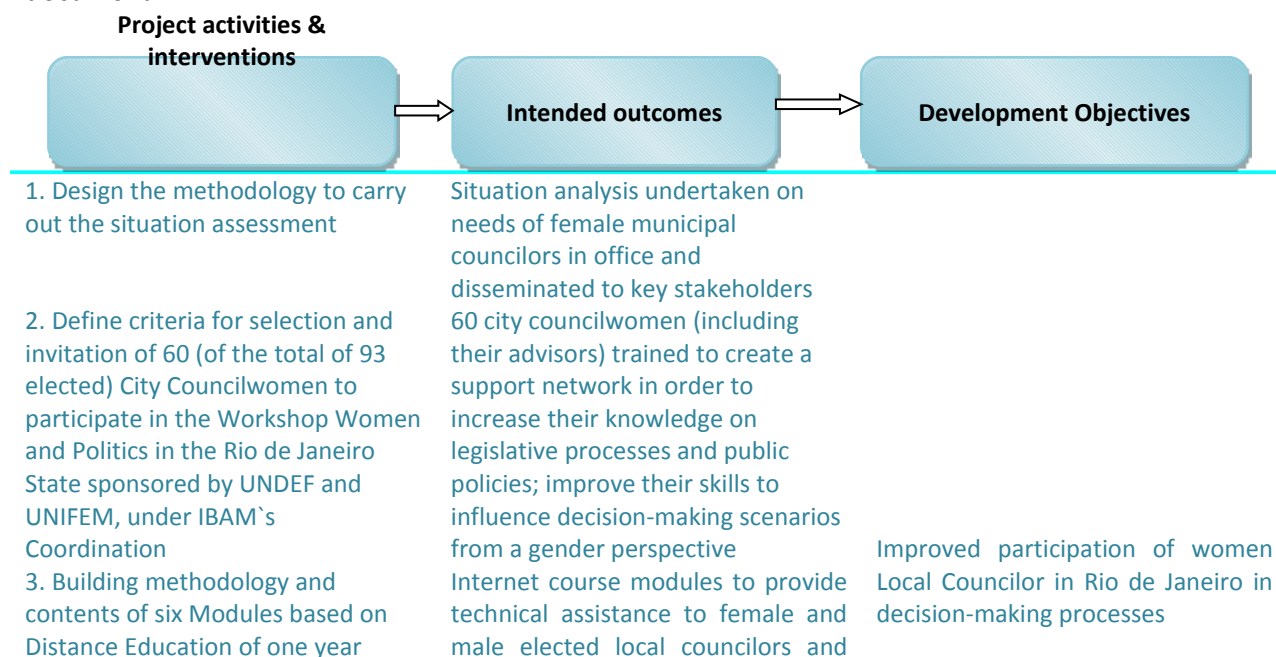
The Project is based on the understanding that strengthening the capacity of elected women in the municipal government will enable them to enhance their political leadership. In this respect, the project has conducted a series of activities with a primary focus on leadership training. IBAM has developed training materials for capacity building workshops attended by women elected in the municipalities of the Southern Region of the State of Rio de Janeiro, benefiting 30-60 women elected officials. In addition, the elected women councilors and other prominent women leaders were involved in network building, developing communication skills and accessing information necessary for policy making.

Advocacy

The advocacy component of the project focused on assisting women leaders with their policy agenda. It also sought to raise voters' awareness about the role of women councilors which would ultimately increase their interest in advancing gender equality policies at local level. Online education and web-based courses providing technical assistance to municipal councilors were designed to incorporate gender sensitive approaches in political processes at local level. The development and dissemination of relevant, tailor-made information also enhanced the policy-making skills of women councilors. The topics involved specific aspects of gender equality and women's political participation. The training modules included policy-making tools and methodologies, functioning of local governments and municipal councils in Brazil, public policies, women's rights, gender budgeting, etc. The internet based course received approval from the project beneficiaries.

b. Logical framework

The logical impact diagram that follows is based on the project logic as set out in the project document. The framework involves four distinct (immediate) outcomes identified in the project document.



<p>duration (Local Governance, Gender Inequalities, Human Rights, Public Policies, Gender and Budget, Women and Men in Politics), delivery a total of four courses</p> <p>4. Women articulated and on-line tracking system implemented</p>	<p>their advisors to advocate women's rights</p> <p>A network of City Councilwomen is created to monitor the implementation of gender mainstreaming in public policies issues (City Councilwomen Watch)</p>
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iii. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation is based on a set of evaluation questions, designed in compliance with UNDEF evaluation guidelines to cover the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability; as well as the issue of UNDEF and UN Women value added, i.e. the extent to which the project implementation reflects the mandate of both organizations. The Evaluation Questions and related sub-questions are presented in Annex 1.

a. Relevance

The project focuses on the issue of political participation of women at municipal level, which is central to the mandate of both UN Women and UNDEF. In view of this fact, most of the project activities focused on training and capacity building, advocacy and networking for women municipal councilors, and awareness-raising on the role of women in politics. The activities were implemented as envisaged in the logical framework.

Initially, the project was designed to reach women and men elected for City Councilors at the local election in 92 municipalities of the State of Rio de Janeiro in October 2008. This state was selected because it had the lowest rate of elected women in Brazil – 9.23% - despite the introduction of a quota system by the federal law which stipulates that each political party should reserve at least 30% of its candidates' list for women.² Despite a mild increase to 13% after the October 2008 elections, the rate of women in politics in the State of Rio de Janeiro was still far below the quota requirement. To redress this gender inequality the project had designed and implemented two distance education courses during the first year of the project. After the first two courses, the trainees and women and men councilors testified that despite their interest in the topic they could not complete the course due to various reasons: lack of time for training activities, difficulties to access internet which was a prerequisite to follow the course, and hardship to incorporate the discussed practices in the legislative processes. As a result, the implementing organization, IBAM, changed the project design and requested an extension, approved by UNDEF on April 19th, 2010. The project design broadened its scope by providing distance education to all city councilors, as well as to political advisors, political parties' activists, women candidates for the parliamentary elections in October 2010, women leaders, and the staff of local governmental machineries for gender equality. Thus, during the project's lifetime IBAM provided training to 904 women and men who completed the distance education course. It should be noted that the online training was conducted on the basis of selection criteria and that the total number of registered trainees was 2,134 and the actual trainees were 1,224 (the dropout rate was approximately 26%).

b. Effectiveness

At the outset, the overarching objective of the project was to support women's political participation and leadership in the municipal councils of the State of Rio de Janeiro. To this end, the project employed two major strategies:

² Law # 9.100 from 29 September 1995 and its amendment Law # 9.504 from 30 September 1997

- capacity building of women leaders in the State of Rio De Janeiro in view of enhancing their influence and improving their performance in the municipal councils of the State and
- advocacy for women’s leadership and political participation in the local governments.

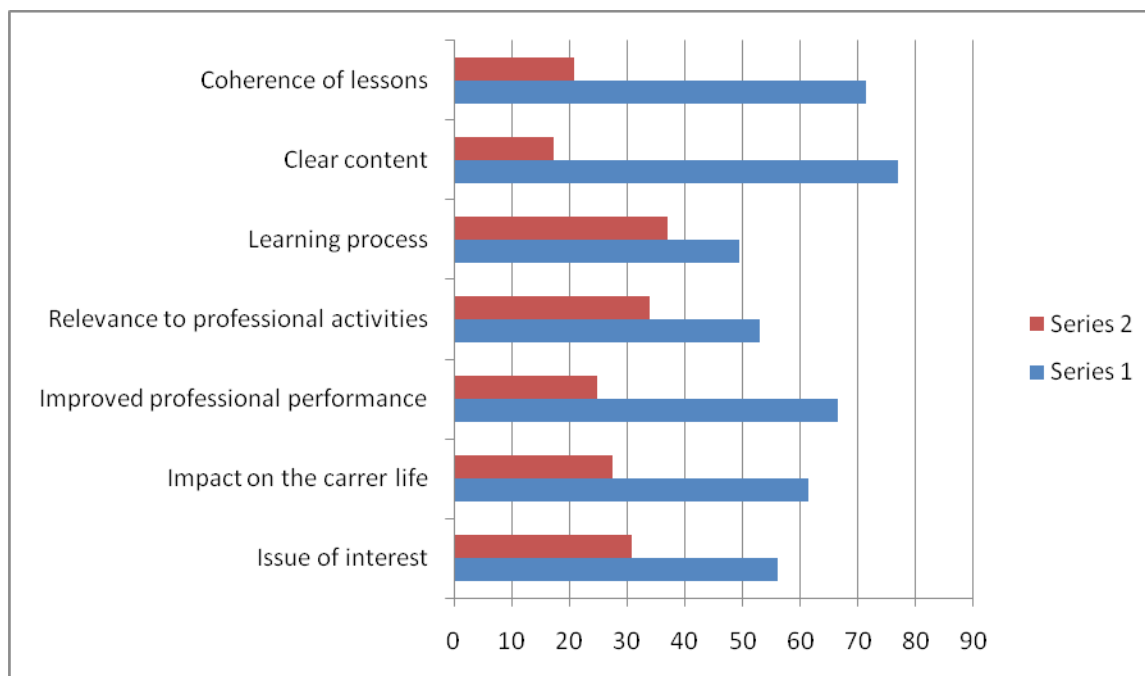
The project sought to ensure that gender sensitive topics are taken into account in the decision making process, in particular, through empowering political women who have been elected during the October 2008 municipal elections through a comprehensive approach including technical assistance, information dissemination, awareness-raising, and training on gender-sensitive political issues. The project focused exclusively on training and capacity building of women municipal councilors during the first two years in office. It also, sought to increase women’s political participation in future elections.

IBAM’s initial intention was to provide training to 30% of the 90 women elected for city councilors and 15% of 1,000 the men elected for city councilors. However, all women members of the city council were invited to participate in the training, 59 women councilors were registered and 37 participated in a program entitled Women and Politics³ which encompassed the following topics: gender inequalities, local government, public policies, gender budgeting, women in politics and women’s rights. The first course was launched on 16 June 2009 with 85 trainees, including 23 women city councilors, 12 men city councilors, and 50 political advisors - 15 men and 35 women. The second course was launched on 17 August with 39 trainees - 4 women city councilors, 6 men city councilors, and 29 political advisors – 12 men and 17 women. The project also emphasized the incorporation of gender perspectives in public policies, programs, and activities initiated in the municipalities of the State of Rio de Janeiro. It therefore envisaged the participation of 160 men and women from the local government to be trained on introducing gender sensitive policies or measures in the local legislation. Nevertheless, the actual number of trainees was much higher than the one initially envisioned - 904 trainees completed the education out of 2,134 registered trainees and 1,224 actual participants.

Beneficiaries’ Feedback:

- the training focused on issues of their interest: 56% always and frequently 30.90%
- what they learned was very important to their profession: always 61.30% and frequently 27.40%;
- they have learned how to improve their professional performance: always 66.50% and frequently 24.90%;
- what they have learned was connected to their professional activities: always 53% and frequently 34%;
- they often reflect on the learning process: always 49.40% and frequently 37%;
- the content of the training materials was objective and clear: always 76.90% and frequently 17.40%;
- the lessons are presented in a coherent and consistent way: always 71.40% and frequently 20.90%.

³IBAM conducted training courses on Women and Politics“Seminário Mulher e Política: Seminário para Vereadoras do Estado do Rio de Janeiro”, sponsored by UNDEF/UNIFEM.



The change in the project design reflects the commitment and interest in gender sensitive topics expressed by the project beneficiaries. Despite the fact that the training activities were designed explicitly for city councilors from the State of Rio de Janeiro, the training was opened to local government representatives from the whole country. Thus the project provided training to 27 women city councilors and 18 men city councilors in addition to 79 political advisors from the State of Rio de Janeiro, and 784 participants from different parts of the country. As a result the training of city councilors was enriched by sharing experiences, ideas and good practices from across the country, benefiting all participants.

The project activities related to enhancing women’s political participation and leadership were organized as distant education modules. The trainees were encouraged to participate in online debates, Q&A sessions and drills as optional activities to facilitate the free flow of ideas in addition to the required online interaction between trainees and instructors. The online modules discussed various topics related to public policy viewed from a gender perspective.



Challenges

- Some of the elected women councilors lacked motivation and/or interest to integrate gender perspectives in their political agenda. In addition, some women in politics do not recognize the need for advocating and including gender perspectives in the political agenda.
- Gender is not perceived as a cross-cutting issue, and the importance of gender mainstreaming in politics is denied.

- Some political parties do not allow women activists who support their political agenda to become candidates for election.
- The conservative structure of some political parties does not permit innovative decision making.
- Stereotyping – sometimes women’s lack of interest in actively participating in politics is due to the traditional stereotype that politics is men’s business and that men have an aptitude for dealing with power relations and political bargains i.e. the gatekeeper issue.

Good practices

- The trainees appreciated the course material provided during the training and asserted that it had an impact in changing their perceptions of gender issues.
- Diversity approach – the final training combined a mixed audience - women and men city councilors, political advisors, gender activists and politicians, as a result of the IBAM’s experience and understanding of trainees’ needs. This in turn had benefits for all participants.
- Trainees from 25 states in Brazil participated in the education, out of 27 states in the country, the only exception were the two Northern states -Acre and Amapá. Once again this diversity contributed to the overall success of the project.
- The distance learning model was tested and constantly improved.
- Women from across the country had a chance to advance their skills.
- The participants acknowledged that they were inspired by the training to pursue political careers.

c. Efficiency

Working Relationship

IBAM had signed partnership agreements with the political parties, as well as with national and state machineries for gender equality: in particular at the national level with the Special Secretary for Women’s Affairs and Special Secretary for Racial Policies, and at state level with the Secretary for Human Rights and Social Assistance. These agreements facilitated the project implementation and the dissemination of training information to the project beneficiaries.

With respect to management actions, IBAM held regular meetings for financial monitoring, planning assessment, strategic decision making, and pedagogical meetings. The latter ones were held on a daily basis and sought to establish trainees performance and access to virtual classes, followed by phone calls to those that did not attend the online classes for over a week, emails encouraging their participation, identifying goals and concerns, providing feedback on their performance, online communication, and so forth.

Delay

The 10-month no-cost delay in the project implementation was due to the fact that the implementing organization had to redesign the project activities to correspond better to the needs of the program beneficiaries. As discussed in the previous section, the project implementation faced various challenges such as lack of motivation on behalf of the elected women to participate in gender sensitive training, conservative attitudes in the political parties with respect to women’s political empowerment, stereotyping, lack of access to computer and online training, insufficient information, etc. Nevertheless, IBAM showed flexibility and managed to broaden the scope of the online training by opening the education activities to city councilors from across Brazil, political advisors, party activists, and representatives of national and local gender equality machineries, thus enriching the training experience for all of the participants. The project extension until July 2011 resulted in impacting a larger number of beneficiaries.

d. Impact

The project beneficiaries were women and men politicians, involved in policymaking or implementation of public policies at local level, as well as political party representatives – activists, candidates from all states in Brazil. According to the feedback provided at the end of each training module, the trainees asserted that their perspective toward policy making had changed as they developed a better understanding of gender equality and women’s role in the political sphere. In this respect, 88.7% of the participants affirm that the online education provided by IBAM was very important for their career; 91.4% of the participants testify that the learning has improved their professional life, and 87% that the learning was relevant to their career. It is to be expected that this significant impact of the gender training will be translated into their work as gender sensitive policies and further political empowerment of women.

In addition, the project outreach has surpassed the participation envisaged initially by the implementing organization. Altogether 904 trainees from different regions in Brazil have completed the course, benefiting from online education provided by IBAM. Despite the delay the broadening of the project participants has resulted in better coverage of the needs of city councilors at national level. It should be noted, however, that IBAM has managed to scale up the project from local/state level to national level as a result of its flexibility and experience. Nevertheless, this move would have exhausted the capacity of a smaller or less experienced organization and would have jeopardized the project implementation. In this respect, it is advised that more in-depth research and analysis ought to be applied when planning projects’ scope and activities to ensure that they fully match the organization’s capacity to see the project through to completion.

Furthermore, despite the high of number of trainees the dropout rate of the training activity was high. Altogether 2,134 trainees were registered for education, however only 904 completed the course, resulting in a high dropout rate – (57.6%). With respect to the participants who enrolled but did not complete the course, 1,224, the dropout rate was 26.1%. These findings coincide with one of the main challenges identified by the project – lack of motivation in the political parties and city councilors. Against this background, IBAM should have considered more comprehensive awareness raising activities, seeking to explain the need to mainstream gender into all political processes, as well as more active media campaigns and outreach before the training courses were launched.

Bearing in mind these observations, it should be noted that IBAM has managed to sensitize a considerable number of men and women in the political sphere and has achieved significant impact. It has also coped well with most of the challenges faced during project’s implementation. In addition, the decision to diversify the trainee group by allowing not only women city councilors to participate but a broader spectrum of the local government enriched the discussion and provided a forum for sharing experiences, ideas and practices among the participants.

e. Sustainability

The project continuity will be ensured by the trainees – women and men municipal councilors, political advisors, political party representatives, political activists and women working to realize their political aspirations. The knowledge and skills obtained during the gender focused online education will be replicated in their day-to-day work in the municipalities of all states of Brazil. City councilors who have been sensitized during the training have changed their understanding and will become intolerant to gender based inequality. Since the trainees have learned about the role of women in the politics they will be motivated and will mobilize other women who have political aspirations to work on this issue in local governments and to play more active roles in the public life.

IBAM is very active and remains committed beyond project's lifetime to women's political empowerment. It will continue working towards increasing women's political participation at local level and improving the understanding of gender equality among local governments. In fact, IBAM is one of the pioneers in Brazil to launch trainings on women's leadership. It has implemented in the past programs related to gender and public policies and will remain engaged in all aspects of mainstreaming gender into local policies. IBAM has a track record of working with local governments on gender related topics, such as gender and planning, gender and power, and gender and institutionalization. Its experience in training women mayors and city councilors, women candidates, mentoring and training of women political activists, etc. will ensure that the good practices and lessons learned during the current project will be multiplied for future generations of women political leaders.

In addition, IBAM has one of the most experienced training schools for public administration officers, called the National School for Urban Service⁴ (ENSUR). For over fifty years ENSUR has been involved in various initiatives related to municipal councilors in Rio de Janeiro and other cities. ENSUR is equipped with the technology and methodology needed to provide online education training programs. Currently, it is implementing a program involving 15,000 municipal officers from the Federal Social Development Ministry, entitled "Bolsa Família".

f. UNDEF and UN Women value-added

The project clearly fits into both UNDEF's and UN Women's mandates by focusing on democratization and advancement of women's rights. It represents a significant contribution to empowering women politicians in Brazil's local governments. The project activities encompass elements of good governance and gender equality, which were incorporated in the training activities. The training modules included topics such as gender inequalities, local government, public policies, gender budgeting, women in politics, women's rights, etc. The good practices and lessons learned from this project will be informative and applicable to future programs focusing on cross-cutting issues such as gender and democratization. The project up-scaling is indicative of the need to involve local governments in the development and implementation of public policies which are transparent and gender sensitive. The current project demonstrates the need to expand this work in Brazil and across the region.

iv. Conclusions

The project *Women and Politics: Gender Advocacy at Local Level in Rio de Janeiro State* implemented in Brazil has substantially contributed to strengthening women's political leadership at local level through capacity building, training, and distant learning offered to women municipal councilors in the state of Rio de Janeiro and nationwide. The implemented activities have had a significant impact on the project beneficiaries as the knowledge and skills acquired during the project lifetime will be translated into gender sensitive policies, good governance practices, and further political empowerment of women. Furthermore, the project up-scaling has proved successful due to the fact that the project outreach has surpassed the number of beneficiaries envisaged initially by the implementing agency. The project clearly demonstrates the need for future interventions seeking to advance women's political participation at local level and improve the understanding of gender equality among local governments in Brazil.

⁴Escola Nacional de Serviços Urbanos – www.enap.gov.br